

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Garron Hobson on 03/08/2010.

The application has been amended as follows:

1) Please amend claim 36 as follows:

36. A breast scanning system configured to scan a breast of a patient, comprising:

a) a bath configured to contain a medium;

b) transducer arrays, disposable in the bath, configured to transmit and receive ultrasound signals;

c) a table, disposable over the bath, the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with one another, configured to receive the patient thereon, having an aperture formed in the table and positionable over the bath configured to receive the breast of the patient pendent therethrough; and

d) means for securing the breast within the bath, including:

a breast magnet with a breast connector configured to secure the breast magnet to the breast of the patient;

a bath magnet disposed in the bath and magnetically coupleable to the breast magnet when the table is in the lowered position, and
a rod attached to the bath magnet and vertically movable within the bath.

2) Please amend claim 42 as follows:

42. A breast scanning system configured to scan a breast of a patient, comprising:

- a) a bath configured to contain a medium;
- b) transducer arrays, disposable in the bath, configured to transmit and receive ultrasound signals;
- c) a table, disposable over the bath, the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with one another, configured to receive the patient thereon, having an aperture and a cavity formed in the table and positionable over the bath configured to receive the breast of the patient pendent therethrough; and
- d) a plurality of table inserts, each insertable into the cavity of the table to be flush with the table, and each having a different sized aperture formed therein.

3) Please amend claim 46 as follows:

46. A breast scanning system configured to scan a breast of a patient, comprising:

- a) a bath configured to contain a medium;
- b) transducer arrays, disposable in the bath, configured to transmit and receive ultrasound signals;

c) a table, disposable over the bath, the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with one another, configured to receive the patient thereon, having an aperture formed in the table and positionable over the bath configured to receive the breast of the patient pendent therethrough; and

d) an annular projection, formed around the aperture in the table, and extending beyond a lower surface of the table.

4) Please amend claim 50 as follows:

50. A breast scanning system configured to scan a breast of a patient, comprising:

a) a bath configured to contain a medium;

b) transducer arrays, disposable in the bath, configured to transmit and receive ultrasound signals;

c) a table, disposable over the bath, the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with one another, configured to receive the patient thereon, having an aperture formed in the table and positionable over the bath configured to receive the breast of the patient pendent therethrough; and

d) a counter-bore, formed in a lower surface of the table around the aperture, sized to receive an upper portion of the bath when the table is in the lowered position.

5) Please amend claim 54 as follows:

54. A breast scanning system configured to scan a breast of a patient, comprising:

a) a bath configured to contain a liquid;

b) transducer arrays, disposable in the bath, configured to transmit and receive ultrasound signals;

c) a table, disposable over the bath, the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with one another, configured to receive the patient thereon, having an aperture formed in the table and positionable over the bath configured to receive the breast of the patient pendent therethrough;

d) an annular channel, disposed around an upper edge of the bath; and

e) a seal, compressible between the bath and the table in the lowered position.

6) Please amend claim 77 as follows:

77. A method for preparing a breast of a patient for scanning, comprising the steps of:

a) securing a breast magnet to the breast;

b) positioning the patient on a table positioned over a bath containing a medium, the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with one another;

c) disposing the breast through an aperture in the table;

d) securing the breast within the bath; and

e) scanning the breast with transducer arrays.

7) Please amend claim 84 as follows:

84. A method for preparing a breast of a patient for scanning, comprising the steps of:

a) positioning the patient on a table positioned over a bath containing a medium, the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with one another;

- b) disposing the breast through an aperture in the table;
- c) immersing the breast into medium in a the bath;
- d) initially more rapidly scanning a larger length of the breast with ultrasound signals from transducer arrays to identify an area of interest in the breast; and
- e) subsequently more slowly scanning a smaller length of the breast around the area of interest with ultrasound signals from the transducer arrays.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: none of the prior art of record, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the recitation therein of the independent claims including providing the table and bath being linearly vertically displaceable with respect with each other between a lowered and raised position.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SAUREL J. SELKIN whose telephone number is (571)270-3813. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 7:00 a.m.- 5:30 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Long Le can be reached on (571) 272-0823. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/S. J. S./
Examiner, Art Unit 3768

/Long V Le/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3768